(c) if so, what are the reasons of imposing ban on the export of non-Basmati rice and by when this ban will be lifted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Food Corporation of India (FCI) has informed that they have not received any such report from Punjab or Haryana.

(b) Government agencies procure only non-basmati paddy/rice which conform to the prescribed specification as offered to them by the farmers. However, since Pusa 1121 variety of rice fetches higher price than Minimum Support Price, it is not being offered by farmers for procurement by Government agencies.

(c) The Government has imposed ban on export of that non-basmati rice whose Minimum Export Price (MEP) is less than US $ 425 per tonne. The ban is expected to result in an increase in procurement of rice for the Central Pool. It is also estimated that availability of rice in the domestic market will increase as a result of this ban.

Upgradation of warehouses and cold storages

† 1207. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any plan/programme regarding increasing the number, capacity and upgrading of the warehouses and cold storages has been launched by the present Government in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of newly constructed warehouses and cold storages, cold storages with enhanced capacity and the warehouses and cold storages with advanced resources during the last three years, State-wise and year-wise;

(d) the details of investment made by the private investors, corporate sector and public sector undertakings in this area during the last three years State-wise and year-wise; and

(e) the details of grant/loan assistance/technological assistance, if any, provided by Government for the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (e) The information is being collected and the same will be placed on the Table of the House.

Import of foodgrains

1208. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the quantum of foodgrains imported during last five years, foodgrain-wise and year-wise;

(b) the import price thereto, foodgrains and year-wise;

(c) the quantum of foodgrains produced during corresponding period in the country, foodgrain and year-wise; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) the quantum of foodgrains procured during corresponding period from doemstic market, foodgrains and year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (d) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Budget allocation to TPDS

†1209. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that only nominal budget is allocated by Government for 'Targeted Public Distribution System' introduced for the purpose of ensuring food security to poor/ deprived;

(b) whether it is also a fact that a large number of poor in rural areas do not get the said facility;

(c) if so, the details of allocated funds and targeted groups in this regard, Statewise;

(d) whether Government is considering to develop any system to make the public distribution system tidy and corruption free; and

(e) what is present mechanism in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) No, Sir. The Government has allocated substantial budget for subsidizing Targeted Public Distribution System to ensure food security for the poor/deprived.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Funds for release of subsidy to FCI and De-centralized Procurement States are provided in the budget as consolidated amount. From this, payment is made to FCI and De-centralized Procurement States depending upon the release of foodgrains made from the stocks with FCI and decentralized procurement States. During 2007-08, the budget allocated for payment of subsidy to FCI, others and decentralized procurement States is of Rs. 25425 crore. Details of the targeted groups (BPL families) covered under TPDS for allocation of foodgrains are given in the enclosed Statement. (*See* below)

(d) and (e) For making TPDS tidy and corruption-free, the Government has taken a number of steps to curb leakages and diversion of foodgrains. A 9-Point Action Plan has been evolved and is under implementation by State/UT Governments since July, 2006. Its implementation is monitored by Department of Food & Public Distribution.

To make functioning of TPDS transparent and amenable to public security, a revised Citizens' Charter has been issued in July, 2007 to facilitate use of provisions of Right to Information Act in relation to functioning of TPDS. It is also proposed to computerize operations of TPDS.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.